2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

7. Defiance is expressed by raising and slightly averting the head, and slowly uttering the word *ârtâ-lŏg-ba*, which is equivalent to "try it on."

8. Women and children, when too frightened to run away, throw themselves on their faces on the ground and raise shrill cries, while men, under similar circumstances, show their alarm by falling backwards, with their hands uplifted, and their eyes rolling. Laughter is sometimes carried to such an extreme as to bring tears.

9. When very angry a man does not stamp his foot, but he places his left hand, palm uppermost, between his teeth, and glares fiercely at some object on the ground *near* the offender; he, at the same time, raises some weapon with his right hand, and utters, as well as the position of the other hand permits, words of terrible import.

10. A man, if threatening another, does not clench his fist, but will seize some weapon or missile, and express his intention of inflicting an injury with it.

11. A dogged or obstinate expression is indicated by averting the head, closing the lips, lowering the eyes, as if ignoring the presence of others, and frowning slightly.

12. When sneering, the teeth are clenched, the upper lip slightly curled, and the eyes are fixed on some object *near* the person addressed.

13. Children, when sulky, behave much as those in other lands, for they pout, frown, and utter noises which betoken discontent.

14. When a man wishes to show that he cannot prevent something being done, or cannot himself do something, he averts his head and pouts his lips, but does not shrug his shoulders.

15. In beckoning, the head is nodded vertically and a hand outstretched, the fingers with the knuckles uppermost being waved towards himself.

16. In affirmation the head is nodded vertically, in negation it is shaken laterally.

Motions.—1. The attitudes of these savages are usually easy; the body when in motion is fairly balanced, the leg, if standing, is straightened; the foot is usually evenly planted, with the toes turned slightly outward; when stalking game they go on tip-toe, but, as a rule, the gait is energetic only under momentary excitement. The average length of a man's pace on level ground is 29–30 inches, and of a woman's about 24 inches. The arms (which they swing when walking) are habitually held with the palms turned inward. If pointing to any object, they usually do so with one finger, and not with the open hand.

2. In climbing up a rope or large creeper they proceed hand over hand with great rapidity, assisted by the big and second

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

481 toes of each foot; if a tree is branched they will scramble up it almost as quickly as if scaling a ladder, and though when "swarming" a mast or cocoa-nut tree they clasp the trunk in the usual manner with the arms and legs, their movements are more rapid, and they are less easily fatigued, than are the generality of natives of India; in descending also they display the same activity.

516 3. I have observed a peculiar trick among young men and women, after a lengthened rest or after engaging in some sedentary occupation, of twisting their bodies from side to side in order to stretch the muscles of the back. In doing this they produce a succession of sounds like that caused by cracking the joints of one's fingers.

4. Their favourite position in taking temporary rest after any violent or prolonged exertion is the ordinary Oriental posture between sitting and standing, *i.e.*, squatting on their heels; if very much exhausted they either sit or lie down.

513 5. The usual attitude in sleep (*vide* Plate III, fig. 2) is to lie on one side, preferably the right, with the knees bent so as to allow of the hand of the upper arm being placed between the thighs and the other hand under the head, which is raised on some impromptu pillow, such as a bundle or a roll of sleeping mat.

142 6. Many are able to shut one eye without closing the other, but they do not appear to possess the power of moving the ears or scalp. They can extend one finger without opening the hand. No tricks of sleight of hand are known to or attempted by them.

7. Much use is made of the feet in holding and picking up light objects, and the great toe is in a considerable degree [483] opposable. When a heavy load has to be moved they prefer pushing to dragging it.[1]

482 **Physical Powers and Senses.**—1. Though for a short distance heavier loads are often borne, the maximum of a man's burden is about 40 lbs.; this he will on occasion carry for as much as 15 miles through the jungles between sunrise and sunset, a distance rarely exceeded in one day under any circumstances, or for more than two or three days in succession. This has been particularly remarked when they have been in pursuit of runaway convicts, for, if they fail in coming up with them within the third day, they are wont to take a long rest, unless strong inducements are offered by way of inciting them to further efforts.

[1] They do not understand, or at least, do not carry into practice, the principle of pushing or dragging a weight *simultaneously*, whether in silence or to the sound of the voice.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

2. Unlike the natives of India, the men allow scarce any weight to rest on the head; the entire strain is thrown on the shoulders and back by passing the cord to which the load is attached across the chest. As this mode would with women be attended with inconvenience on account of the *chīp-*,[1] besides causing injury to the breasts, the cord is in their case brought over the head,[2] and the back is bent in order to reduce the pressure. 482

3. In his account of a visit to the Nágá Hills, about ten years ago,[3] Mr. S. E. Peal makes allusion to the "peculiar noise, like a whistle or note on a flute, clear and plain, and seeming to come from the chest, made by Nágánis when carrying loads and distressed." The same peculiarity is noticeable under similar circumstances among the Andamanese of *both* sexes. [142]

4. Running is seldom practised by them except for a short distance, when hunting, &c., and four or five hundred yards appears to be the greatest extent of ground they can cover without halting or slackening speed. Though in running or walking on a good road they are generally passed without difficulty by natives of India, their superiority in the jungles is at once manifest when the beaten track is left; and in the ease and rapidity with which they are able to bound over rocks, fallen trees, mangrove roots, and other obstacles, few, if any, would care, or be able, to compete with them. 481

5. Both coastmen and "junglees" are, as a rule, gifted with extremely keen sight. It was, however, found impossible to gauge their powers by the test papers[4] in consequence of their inability to count; but many satisfactory proofs of their acuteness of vision have been afforded, as, for instance, by the manner in which, while coasting along the shore or when threading their way through the jungle, they detect birds or other objects, so hidden by the dense foliage of their forests as to be hardly distinguishable, even when pointed out, to more than ordinarily sharp-eyed Europeans and others. 151

6. The inland tribes have especially keen scent, and are able from an almost incredible distance to specify, and direct their steps towards, any particular tree that may happen to be in blossom; their sense of taste is also strongly developed, enabling them to discriminate between the various flowers from which the bees have produced their honey.

7. On the other hand, while the coastmen are not deficient in

[1] *Vide* Appendix B, No. 24.

[2] A peculiarity in the conformation of the female skull due to this practice will be hereafter noted, under the heading of "Deformations," paragraph 3.

[3] *Vide* "Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal," vol. xli, part 1, 1872.

[4] Viz., those used in the Army for recruiting purposes.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

individual in the method of tying and knotting the string employed in the manufacture of these missiles;[1] these, however, are often so slight that, even when pointed out, they are scarcely to be detected by a stranger, unless he be one who has bestowed careful attention to the subject.

7. In their savage state they never attempt to represent any object, and, though they do not appear to possess any natural taste for drawing, they differ from the Australians[2] in the intelligence they display in recognising any familiar form depicted in a sketch; and while no such method for indicating the situation of any place is known or employed among themselves, some of them are quick in understanding a chart of their own country, and are able to point out the sites of their various encampments.

8. It is hardly necessary to state that they have nothing answering to mile-stones or roadside marks. Swamps are never crossed, but in all cases avoided by circuitous routes; experience seems to have taught them the natural line of fords from salient to salient banks, and, when a creek has to be crossed, they always avail themselves of the advantages thus afforded, even making a detour in order to do so.[3] This applies, however, to those occasions when they are not heavily laden, or are carrying articles liable to be damaged by immersion, or which would hinder them from swimming.

Swimming.—1. With the exception of some of the *ē·rem-tâ·ga-*,[4] a knowledge of the art of swimming is common to members of both sexes; the *children* even, learning almost as soon as they can run, speedily acquire great proficiency. In this accomplishment the Andamanese greatly surpass the majority of Europeans, but it is probable that, in competition with an experienced English swimmer, their best men would be distanced in the first few hundred yards, it being not so much for speed, as for the length of time they can remain in the water, that they are remarkable.

[1] With reference to this circumstance, it may be mentioned that, a few years ago (1876), five aborigines, concerned in the murder near Kyd Island of some Chinese traders with whom they had had a dispute, were discovered by means of the arrows found on the spot, as these were identified by some of their acquaintances then living at Port Blair.

[2] Brown. [From remarks, however, contained in a recent article, entitled "The Indo-Chinese and Oceanic Races," by Mr. A. H. Keane, which appeared in "Nature" (Jan. 6th, 1881), it would appear that the low estimate of the Australian intellect formed by certain ethnologists is not shared by all, and "many instances are given of their skill even in drawing, a capacity for which was wholly denied them."]

[3] Wells are not dug, but when encamping, whether for days or months, care is always taken that the spot selected be near some fresh-water stream.

[4] The reason of this is obvious, as it is known that the majority of the creeks are fordable in many places within three miles of the coast, even in the rainy season, and, therefore, the necessity of acquiring the art of natation has never been experienced by those permanently resident in the interior.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

781 2. The "frog-stroke" is the one in general use; in diving,[1] they invariably leap *feet* foremost into the water, and their skill in recovering any small object which has been thrown into the sea, or which is lying at a considerable depth, equals that displayed by Somali boys.

3. The younger people delight in disporting themselves in the sea, and in displaying their skill in capturing a harpooned turtle or fish by diving after it; but, while they surpass most races in this respect, they are by no means equal to the astounding feat of catching fish—not to mention any larger than themselves—by merely plunging into the sea after them, as was alleged by the ex-sepoy convict, *Dúdhnáth*, in one of his many Munchausen-like statements. His allegation, according to Dr. Mouat, was that he had "seen three or four of them dive into deep water, and bring up in their arms a fish six or seven feet in length, which they had seized." A well-known work having been lent me in which the Andamanese are referred to, I took advantage of an opportunity to show them some of the illustrations, amongst others one in which two of their race are represented as rising to the surface with an enormous fish in their arms, while a third person, standing on the shore, is endeavouring to despatch it by repeated blows with a log. Great was the amusement of my Andaman friends, and also of those natives of India, who, from long residence among them in the homes are well aware of the degree of skill they are capable of manifesting in their various pursuits, to learn the wonderful prowess attributed to them, and a hearty laugh was indulged in at the artist's expense, who, however, it will be seen from the foregoing, did not draw entirely upon his fertile imagination for the incident.

[1] Since my return to the Andamans in September, 1882, by way of testing their powers of remaining under water, I timed three *áryó-to-* youths, who were instructed to do their best to distinguish themselves. One reappeared above the water after an interval of forty seconds, and made excuses for himself, while the other two remained down for fully seventy seconds, and could doubtless have held out longer had any sufficient inducement been offered them by way of reward.

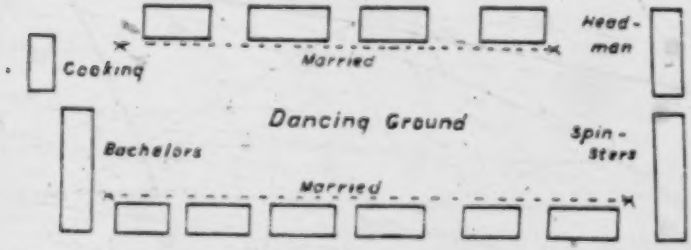
in other savages. At Government House, Calcutta, in 1895, when a party was told to sit down and weep to show the custom at meetings, in a few moments the weeping became genuine, and when after a short time they were told to stop and get up, tears were streaming down their faces. 576

General Capacities.—The Andamanese are good climbers, and rapid walkers and runners, moving with a free and independent gait, and can travel considerable distances at a time. The Jarawas turn their toes in, due to the necessity of stooping to pass along their paths through the tangled jungle. The Eremtaga are good but not remarkable trackers. The Aryoto are good swimmers and are much at home in the water. The Andamanese generally show a dexterity in getting about their thick and tangled jungles which baffles all immigrants, though in this respect the Eremtaga quite out-distance the Aryoto, and the Jarawas apparently all the others. In the jungles all shooting with arrows is necessarily at very short distance, and generally the Andamanese are good shots at short distances only, judging direction very well but distance hardly at all. They can however at the very short distance required for shooting fish allow accurately for refraction in moving water and will shoot their fish successfully even in the surf in a manner that is inimitable: this is really due to accurate judgment of direction. 481

The Andamanese are unadventurous seamen, poling and paddling their canoes with small spade paddles at considerable speed, faster than that of an ordinary ship's boat for a little distance though they could not paddle away from one in even a short chase, but they never go out of sight of land, have never been even to the Cocos (30 miles), nor to Narcondam and Barren Island, nor had they ever any knowledge of the existence of the Nicobars till our arrival. Man has a legend from Car Nicobar doubtfully going to show that the Onges from the Little Andaman once made raids on that island: but if this were true they would do so still. 502

IV. Habits and Customs.

Dwellings.—Except in the Little Andaman and among the Jarawas there are no fixed habitations, the search for easily obtained food and insanitary habits obliging the people to be nomads, for they have no practice of cultivation and domesticate no animal whatever except dogs obtained from the English. They thus dwell in various customary encampments, situate within their respective territories. At these encampments, usually fixed in sheltered spots, they erect about 14 temporary huts capable of holding up to 50 to 80 persons, arranged facing inwards on an oval plan always more or less irregular, thus— 621 [242] [231]



The central space is the dancing ground. A hut is merely a thatch about 4 feet long by 3 feet wide, sloping from 8 inches behind to 4½ feet in front, placed on four uprights and some cross-pieces without walls. In unsheltered spots and at the Head-Quarters of Septs large circular huts are built with a good deal of ingenuity, having eaves nearly touching the ground. These will be as much as 15 feet high and 30 feet in diameter. For hunting purposes mere thatched shelters are erected for protection from the wind. Close to every hut is a very small platform for surplus food about 18 inches from the ground, and in it at least one fire is carefully preserved. This is the one thing that the Andamanese are really careful about for they do not know how to make fire, though 342 [251] 372

there till 1-30 P.M. At 2 P.M., going still due east we reached the top of the next ridge. Halted 15 minutes, reached the top of the next ridge at 2-50 P.M., having crossed another valley. Halted till 3-10 P.M. An Andamanese climbing a tree said he could see the survey station (a hill cleared of jungle with a post on it) and also Kyd Island which he recognised by a large gurjan tree, we went still due east and came to a stream with water in it at 3-25 P.M., and crossed it. An Andamanese went up it and said he had found an old Jarawa camp a little way up it. Went to see it and found the remains of two huts. It had not been used for a long while. As we had had a tiring day, decided to spend the night in the camp and to return to Jatang the next morning. C00

1st February 1902.—Left camp at 7-20 A.M., going due east reached a stream flowing north at 7-40 A.M., and still going west another large stream flowing east at 7-45 A.M.; this soon bent to the north, so we left it and continued going east. This stream had lots of water in it and an Andamanese speared a fresh water fish about 10 inches long in it: followed along the stream for 100 yards and left it at 8-10 A.M., reached the top of another ridge, from which an Andamanese from the top of a tree could see Kyd Island, but not the sea.

At 8-25 A.M., going a little to the east of south we reached the top of a ridge from which the top of Jatang Hill (Survey Station) could be seen.

At 9-5 A.M., going a little to the east of south reached the next ridge and halted there for 5 minutes, and at 9-30 A.M. we reached a stream which the Police had visited the second day that they went out by themselves. Picked up the Elephant tracks at 10-30 A.M., and reached Jatang camp at 11-25 A.M.

Diary, dated 5th February 1902, of Mr. M. Bonig, Assistant Harbour Master, Port Blair, from 25th January to 4th February 1902.

25th January.—Left Port Blair in the steam launch *Belle* at 6-30 P.M., with Mr. Vaux, also 1 Naik, 6 Police, 15 Andamanese, and 3 convict servants.

Arrived at Macpherson Strait at 9 P.M. and anchored there for the night.

26th January.—Left Macpherson Strait at 9 A.M., arrived at Port Mouat at 11 A.M., left Port Mouat at 1-35 P.M., and proceeded to Constance Bay and anchored off a place, called by the Andamanese Koyab-lar-tenga, at 2-30 P.M. Took an Andamanese canoe in tow from here.

27th January.—Left Constance Bay at 7-30 A.M., for Port Campbell and arrived at the latter place at 11 A.M. Went ashore with Mr. Vaux, first at Montgomery Island and then on the mainland to search for new traces of Jarawas.

Found an old Jarawa bow, a basket and a bamboo drinking cup in the jungle, but no new tracks of Jarawas were found; they do not appear to have frequented this place since the Census expedition in February, 1901.

The Andamanese shot 12 turtles in the evening in the shallow water between Montgomery Island and the mainland, which place seems to be a feeding ground for turtles.

28th January.—Left the ship at 7-30 A.M., with 9 Andamanese, 4 Police and 1 convict, crossed Chauga Juru between Clyde Island and the mainland and landed on the mainland opposite. Sent the Havildar of Police with 3 Constables and 3 Andamanese along a small creek into the jungle, to search for fresh tracks of Jarawas, with instructions to try and meet us about 4 miles further north. I went with the remainder of the Andamanese along the shore up to Gering-chápá-jig and followed up the left bank, while I sent three Andamanese up the right bank with instructions to follow us as soon as they had found fresh tracks. We soon discovered that the Jarawas frequented the vicinity, there being foot-prints of Jarawas in the swamp. The foot-prints of Jarawas are easily distinguished from any other, as the Jarawas appear to walk in a crouching attitude with their toes turned inwards, most probably the result of having to live in the dense jungle of the Andamans, where upright walking would be impossible. We also observed that a large tree had been stripped by them of its bark for the purpose, as the Andamanese informed me, of making waist ornaments. After having searched in the jungle for another 4 miles to try and find our other party, we returned to the beach. The three other Andamanese had not yet arrived, so we forded the creek and followed them up and observed by the foot-prints, that they had followed a single Jarawa along the shore. We caught them up again after a little while and as it was getting late then, I decided to return on board. Going along the shore I saw the remains of a wreck: there were only left of it three anchors, some chains, part of the windlass and about 20 tons of cast iron kentledge; judging from the size of the anchors it must have been a 200 to 300 ton vessel. When I returned to the boat, I found that my other party had returned before noon without having seen anything, so I decided not to send them alone in future. Arrived on board at 6-30 P.M. [481]

29th January.—Left Port Campbell for Bilep at day-break, arriving at the latter place at 7-30 A.M. Mr. Vaux and myself divided again into two parties, Mr. Vaux following up Gering-chápá-jig, while I went up Bilep-jig. We rowed about a mile up the creek and went ashore leaving the boat by itself. We soon found the Jarawa tracks and followed them up through the jungle. We saw by the foot-prints that there were two men, one woman and a child in the vicinity. We followed these up and came on a temporary encampment, where they had been resting the night previous. It consisted of only a few leaves put on the ground to sleep on and a piece of wood as a head-rest, they having selected

4: Guha E-5 (1948-1949)1953 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

namely, that they are a very dark pigmy tribe, with short round head and infantile features. The hair of the head is wholly of the distinctly "peppercorn" pattern, *i.e.*, it grows in small tufts with intervening vacant spaces between (*see* Plate VII). The women were noticed to possess steotopygia in a markedly developed form (*see* Plate II, Fig. 2).

Freiherr von Eickstedt who visited the Islands in December 1926, claimed that he was the first scientist to observe these two traits among the Andamanese. His contentions, however, cannot stand scrutiny, for in a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh on February 2, 1880, entitled "Remarks on the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands" and published in the Proceedings of that Society, Surgeon E. S. Brander, who was stationed at Port Blair as Second Medical Officer, speaking about the general features of the Andamanese women, remarked that they "undergo exceptional enlargement of the gluteal region, the appearance of which is enhanced by their custom of attaching branches of twigs to their waist bands, so as to hang over this region. This large development of abdomen, hip and buttocks, added to a very waddling style of gait, gives these women in progression a most grotesque appearance". Eight years after, in a paper published in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography, Maurice Portman, who was the Officer-in-Charge of the Andamanese, in describing his visit to the Little Andaman, wrote about "the Hottentot Venus order of beauty" of the Onge women. The Hottentot Venus, as is well-known, is noted for her steotopygic development. These two papers appeared over 40 years before von Eickstedt's publication.

A detailed comparative review of the somatic traits of the Onges based on the measurements taken by members of this Department will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin. Mr S. S. Sarkar's analysis of the blood group data is, however, published in this issue.

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10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

105 177 182 For the fact that the Andamanese inhabits the coastal areas of the Andamans, the fishing is an well-known art to them. The pristine culture is virtually lost and the few who are still now surviving have been brought under the folds of government help. Still now the headmen [225] [481] of the Andamanese in the Middle Andaman, *Loka* is found doing turtle hunting in their canoes and climbing up the coconut trees without the help of any rope. Still now they are found dancing in groups but they are few and far between. All of them wear clothes and live in the huts made by the Forest Department.

THE ABORIGINES OF THE LITTLE ANDAMAN GROUP.

101 The Onges, the Jarawas and the Sentinelese belong to this group.

The Jarawas

177 648 [101] [181] Of all these three groups, the Jarawas only live in the Great Andamans and their occurrence in the Great Andamans has been explained by many authorities, as has been explained earlier. The Jarawas are implacably hostile and the best of efforts to bring them under terms of amity have proved furtile. Lt. Colebrook and Archibald Blair first came in contact with the Jarawas and in course of time, the Aka-beas, belonging to the Great Andaman Group, living in the South Andaman became friendly with the foreigners while the hostility of the Jarawas remained unabated. The Jarawa hostility has been always increasing and it was more so since 1921. In 1923, 37 Jarawas were shot and in 1938, a Jarawa woman and her 4 children were captured. So the chances of meeting the Jarawas have been few and far between and the great decline in their number has in all practical senses stopped the apprehension of their raids in the new settlement areas. Still now, of course a person penetrating deep into the forests of the eastern parts of South Andaman should always be on the guard against an attack from the Jarawas.

The Onges.

The Onges, having experienced the impact of the foreigners at the latest period, are at present the most widesprend of all the aborigines of the Andamans. They do not have the truculence of the Jarawas and the attempts for bringing them under closer ties and terms of amity with the foreigners have proved successful, though the essential traits of their social, cultural and material life remain unaltered.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

Many Onges, in fact, have fine features,
142 and some of the women have a certain beauty and grace of move-
[481] ment, with a dignified walk and restrained gestures, despite their utter lack of any sense of shame. The sclera are very white, and the highly characteristic contrast between the intense black of the skin and the startling white of the eyes gives the Andamanese a ferocious appearance, which on smiling turns into a curiously childish ex-
151 pression (see further, p. 19). It is a curious fact that although the
145 Onges have remarkable sight (p. 47), few of them can close each eye separately, although they are all completely ambidextrous.

144 In examining the child I had particularly in mind the very short
142 stature of the pygmies both of Asia and Africa, which is regarded
164 by some as pathological. The Andamanese have been described as Negroes who have degenerated through genetical isolation. This theory holds that they are descended from slaves who fled from the Portuguese after a shipwreck. I do not regard this as tenable. Pygmies in general, and the Andamanese in particular, are well-proportioned and physically outwardly normal. One cannot speak of dwarfism as determining their characteristics: this implies abnormal development as the result of hypophyseal disorder or
[143] thyroid imbalance. Cases of achondroplastic dwarfism are known among the pygmies of Africa, particularly where there has been mixing with Negroes, and these patients are sometimes taller than their normal kinfolk, but I found no cases among the pygmies of Asia.

142 One characteristic of the Bushmen which does occur among the Andamanese is steatopigia in both males and females. This is nor-
[114] mally much more prevalent in females, and indeed before my visit to the Andamans von Eickstedt held that it was non-existent in males. I had always disagreed with this view, and was able to verify its occurrence in both males and females.

Dobson in the nineteenth century recorded in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* of London, the unusual appearance of the buttocks in the Andamanese, although he did not specifically refer to the phenomenon as steatopygia, and went only so far as to suppose it the result of an unusual accumulation of fat in the gluteal area. To him, however, must go the credit for the first observation.

114 His observation led scientists – in my view wrongly – to compare
142 the Andamanese with the Bushmen. The presence of steatopygia,
144

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

the Onges as hiding-places or temporary shelters. In these cavities, which remain full of water right through the dry season, flourish a horde of amphibia, many hitherto unknown.

The great trees are sometimes so close together that it is literally impossible to pass between them, yet it is rare to find two of the same species next to each other, so great is the variety. Huge clumps of ferns are everywhere, hiding the roots of dying trees, hundreds of years old, and fallen trunks rotting on the ground. Some of the thicker and taller trees protect themselves from the monsoon gales by developing buttresses, usually four or six to a tree, which stand out from the trunk like right-angled triangles, with the apex about ten metres from the ground. If a blanket is stretched between the sloping sides of two of the buttresses one can improvise a shelter which is extremely comfortable by local standards, and both man and animals take advantage of this natural cover; I myself took shelter like this on many occasions. (They need to be treated with caution, however, as the local snakes have a predilection for siestas in the darkest corners.) If a hard piece of wood is struck against one of the buttresses it echoes hollowly, and the Andamanese often make use of them to transmit warning messages over considerable distances, using a form of code. A few beats can make every inhabitant within a wide radius vanish from sight, hastily making for the nearest hiding-place. It is hopeless to try and ferret them out once they have been warned, and there is always a risk of being killed by one of their arrows in the process.

Sometimes the Onges used to disappear suddenly for fun. The blackness of their skin is a great help in this, since even on the brightest afternoon it is intensified by the obscurity of the forest. One has a disturbing sensation of being entirely alone, yet knowing that dozens of pairs of eyes are watching as the Onges glide silently from trunk to trunk between the buttresses.

The whole island is a mass of knotted vegetation, and it is useless to attempt to cut any form of lasting path, as the plants immediately grow back. 'Walking' in the Andamans therefore means opening up a way with a hatchet, unless one adopts the rapid but exhausting Onge method of swinging over obstacles by the lianas. This is the kingdom of the epiphytes. The lianas cover their hosts as if determined to hide them, and clumps of orchids hang from nearly every trunk, although their flowers are unfortunately very small.